

ECONOMIC POSTAGE BILL.

JUNE 11, 1898.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

Mr. CLARK, of Iowa, from the Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 460.]

The Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads, to whom was referred the bill (S. 460) to extend the uses of the mail service, and commonly known as the economic postage bill, have had the same under consideration and beg to submit herewith their favorable report upon the measure.

This is a bill to make it lawful for the postal cards and envelopes with coupons attached, as patented by the United States Economic Postage Association, to be carried in the mails of the United States under the provisions set forth in the act. The form of the cards and envelopes is shown in the exhibit following this report. By the method proposed the sender of these cards or envelopes will pay the full rate as required by law, but he will not pay return postage unless the card or envelope is actually returned. As it is now business men and others who solicit trade or information by inclosing stamps, stamped envelopes, or postal cards to a correspondent say that only about 10 per cent are returned. This limits this use of the mails.

It is claimed by upward of two thousand business men, who have made statements submitted to the committee, that they would vastly increase the sending out of cards and envelopes if they could be certain their investments would not be lost. Under this bill, and by the use of the proposed cards and envelopes, a method is provided by which the difficulties business men have heretofore labored under in this respect will be obviated.

In a report made to the Fifty-fourth Congress from the Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads, accompanying this same bill, the careful and well informed chairman of the committee—Mr. Loud, who drew up the report—estimated, from such data as he had, that it might not be extravagant to say that the stimulus given to mercantile and commercial interests throughout the whole country, under the operation of this law, would approximate \$30,000,000 net revenue. The bill has been carefully prepared so as to guard fully the rights and interests of the Government. The Postmaster-General may, in his discretion, test the practical operation of this act in such one or more cities as he may select before extending it generally throughout the country, and, if


the result be unfavorable, suspend it altogether. This is a matter that must be tested, as to its good or ill consequences, by administrative trial. The bill charges the Post-Office Department with the making of this trial.

If the American people are served, business promoted, popular convenience increased, and the revenues of the Post-Office Department multiplied by its operation without conflict with the rights of the Government, then the people and the Government should have these benefits. If it does not work these results, then the Post-Office Department and the statute books should not be burdened with it. The preliminary test under the supervision of the Postmaster-General will solve the whole problem with perfect safety for the Government and all concerned. Objections can easily be made, based upon hypothetical assumptions, to the bill and the plan proposed, but the committee do not deem it necessary to discuss these, in view of the fact that the Postmaster-General is to make a trial of the plan before adopting it. If these objections, based on presumptions, prove well founded, he will suspend the operations of the act; if they prove unfounded, the committee will but have wasted its time in discussing them.

A bill for the same purpose, but not so well guarded in its provisions, was introduced in the Fifty-third Congress by Mr. Henderson, then chairman of the House Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads, and was favorably and unanimously reported from that committee to the House. The bill was introduced in the Senate in the Fifty-fourth Congress by Senator Vilas, late Postmaster-General, and it was favorably reported and unanimously passed by the Senate February 18, 1897. The bill, being approved by Hon. William L. Wilson, then Postmaster-General, was introduced into the House in the Fifty-fourth Congress, and favorably reported from the Committee on the Post-Office and Post-Roads. In the Fifty-fifth Congress the bill as now before the House unanimously passed the Senate March 15, 1898.

Your committee recommend its passage.

EXHIBIT.

FILL OUT BLANK ORDER ON OPPOSITE SIDE AND MAIL IN NEAREST LETTER BOX.	Order Card. <small>UNLAWFUL TO CHANGE ADDRESS</small>	CHECK OR TOKEN.  ONE CENT.	THIS COUPON IS TO BE DETACHED BY POSTMASTER.
	USE THIS CARD WHEN ORDERING WOOD OR COAL FROM ME. POSTAGE GUARANTEED.		
	RICHARD ROE, DEALER IN WOOD AND COAL, WASHINGTON, D. C.		
	UNITED STATES ECONOMIC POSTAGE ASSOCIATION.		
		No Stamp Required. GOOD FOR POSTAGE WHEN DELIVERED TO RICHARD ROE, WASHINGTON, D. C.	

Washington, D. C., 189 . Please deliver to No. Ton Coal Cord Wood Name Address		RICHARD ROE, DEALER IN WOOD AND COAL.
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Commercial Envelope.

UNLAWFUL TO CHANGE ADDRESS.

USE THIS ENVELOPE IN ANY BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE
WITH U.S. POSTAGE GUARANTEED.

U. S. ECONOMIC POSTAGE ASSOCIATION,**Atlantic Building,****WASHINGTON, D. C.**

THIS COUPON IS TO BE DETACHED BY POSTMASTER.

GOOD FOR POSTAGE WHEN DELIVERED
TO ADDRESSEE.

UNITED STATES ECONOMIC
POSTAGE ASSOCIATION,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

